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1943

# Homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, April 30, 1943.

Subject: "STREAMLINED HOUSEKEEPING." Information from the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

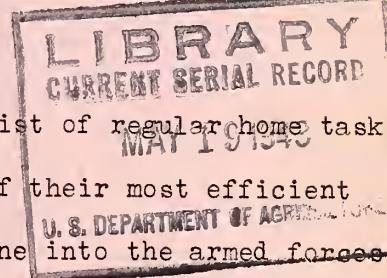
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Wartime has added many new duties to the long list of regular home tasks farm women have always done. At the same time some of their most efficient helpers... the strong older boys and girls... have gone ~~into the armed forces~~ of war industries, and hired helpers are difficult to find. So women have had to streamline their housekeeping in order to carry on. Mary Rokahr, extension home management specialist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, tells some of the ways they are doing it. Perhaps some of these short cuts may help your homemaking problems, too.

Miss Rokahr lists 3 principal ways to get extra time. The first is dropping any work not absolutely essential. The second is learning more efficient ways to do what must be done. And the third is getting willing cooperation from the family.

Miss Rokahr illustrates by telling about some real farm homes. She calls the first homemaker "Mrs. Cass," because she, and her husband, and their little boy, 2 and a half years old, live on a 240-acre farm in Cass County, Nebraska. Mrs. Cass has always taken care of the kitchen garden and the chickens. Now she has to do many of the barnyard chores and the milking. Half a day a week she helps her husband grind stock feed. She feeds the cattle, and sometimes drives the tractor.

Doing the family laundry... keeping the house clean and in order... and getting meals, are some of the jobs Mrs. Cass has streamlined. Here are some of the ways she has done it.





She washes only once in 2 weeks, of course when she buys clothes, she chooses those easy to wash and iron... and around the house she uses as few things as possible that have to be ironed. She generally presses workshirts and overalls dry... and irons articles right from the line. She takes them down when they are at the right stage of dampness and irons them at once. That saves the job of sprinkling. She smooths and folds sheets and Turkish towels as she takes them off the line, dry, sweet and well-sunned. Almost nothing needs dampening down and then ironing.

She keeps the house orderly by having good places to put things... and putting them there... never letting a room get cluttered.

She simplifies dishwashing by leaving the evening dishes to be done with the breakfast dishes, except for cooking utensils. She puts saucepans to soak as soon as they are empty. Mrs. Cass uses the scald-and-drain system of doing dishes ... that saves wiping.

To make meal - getting easier, she plans her menus a week in advance, and markets once a week. She has many "one-dish" and oven meals to cut down the number of utensils and dishes to be washed, and shorten the time for meal-getting. She brushes vegetables well and cooks them with their peelings on.

She has had to drop out of all organizations except church and the home demonstration club. Her biggest problem in streamlining right now is the little boy. Sometimes she takes him in a wagon, with his playthings, to the field with her, and sometimes she leaves him alone near the house in a playpen.

Now let's turn from this Nebraska picture to a Connecticut farm home. "Mrs. Hampton" has raised a big family of 11 children. Although 8 of her children still live at home, she is able to take part in many outside activities... the Red Cross, the Farm Bureau, and her Bible class, because "many hands make light work", and she has trained all her children to take their full share of household duties.



The Hampton's never hire any help. Several of the boys have outside jobs, but they do farm chores, too. All 3 of the girls who are at home can cook and make their own clothes. One way Mrs. Hampton gets cooperation from her family is by having definite jobs lined up for each one to do. In other words, she thinks out ahead what has to be done, how long it will take, who is to do it.

Mrs. Hampton holds down dusting, washing and ironing to a minimum...using many of the same methods Mrs. Cass does. And she says she sometimes drops regular housework in order to do something else one of the children very much wants. Perhaps that's one reason why she gets such good cooperation. She believes that "keeping house is not all there is to homemaking."

She keeps meals very simple... omits all extra dishes and plates in serving a meal... serves directly from the stove to the plates... cutting out serving dishes and keeping food hotter for "seconds". She has a system for clearing table and stacking dishes and has taught all the children to follow it.

One job Mrs. Hampton drops completely is getting breakfast for the whole family. She has a pantry converted into a small compact kitchen with everything handy, and good storage spaces. At night she lays out everything needed for breakfast. In the morning each person in the family gets his own breakfast and cleans up afterwards.

Her greatest neatness problem is what to do with coats, wet boots and mittens in cold weather. She says before another winter comes along, she will have a special closet for outdoor garments.

Now for a few ways other farm women gain extra minutes for wartime work: They buy more baked goods... bake less at home... make less jelly, but do more canning to save time and have better food next winter... combines lunch and supper dishes, or dishes from any two meals... serve meals in the kitchen to save steps... have each member of the family make his own bed... train teen-age daughters to care for their own clothes. They use only necessary rooms... shut up the others to save cleaning. They have better cupboards and storage places... they keep all equipment in good running order. They keep a pad and pencil in the kitchen for a market list... a bulletin board in the hall for information. This board may tell the daily duties of each... the goings and comings and plans of each... and any other announcements or directions. Each of these shortcuts streamlines housekeeping in one way or another... saves unnecessary work... does something in a better way... gets better cooperation from the family.

